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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 000685

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PTER ASEC PREL AG

SUBJECT: AQIM LEADER: DON'T TOUCH OUR WOMEN

REF: ALGIERS 663

Classified By: Ambassador Robert S. Ford, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) On June 5, Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) posted a communique on a Jihadi website (www.shmo5alislam.net) entitled "in your honor, our sister." The communique, signed by AQIM leader Abdeloudoud Droukdal, referred to a Moroccan woman named "Fatiha" who was allegedly beaten by a Moroccan policeman. The communique received wide distribution among other jihadi websites praising AQIM leader Droukdal for highlighting the insult to Fatiha's honor. In his communique Droukdal called on all Jihadi supporters to increase their attacks in the Islamic Maghreb.

WHO IS FATIHA?

¶2. (SBU) On June 1, Shmo5Islam web user "Hafid Al-Hussain" claimed that Fatiha lives in Casablanca and her husband "Said Fares" had been sentenced to 20 years in prison due to his involvement in terrorist activities inside Morocco. Fatiha has a one year old child and lives in a tin house, the story goes. She was demonstrating along with other wives next to the "Akasha prison" in Rabat, in support of their imprisoned Islamist husbands. Subsequent pictures were widely circulated on the web of a policeman in a civilian suit grabbing a covered women whom the website claims to be Fatiha, then throwing her on the ground along with her one year old son. On June 6, the debate among Jihadists demanding revenge for Fatiha's alleged mistreatment escalated to the point that AQIM issued a call to avenge Fatiha and every Muslim woman whose honor has been stained by the hands of the "Apostates". (Comment: In AQIM's view, every government official, especially security forces elements, is an "Apostate".)

DROUKDAL: DON'T TOUCH OUR WOMEN

¶3. (SBU) In his June 5 communique, Droukdal said he had seen the pictures of Fatiha being humiliated on the internet. He promised that AQIM would avenge Fatiha's honor as well as all those women whose honor had been insulted. He threatened that any "Apostate" who touched an honest Muslim woman would be killed. Additionally, he encouraged all Muslim brothers in the Islamic Maghreb to carry arms and prepare ammunition to cleanse the Maghreb of agents of the Jews and Christians. He continued to call on Muslims who cannot participate in the Jihad (probably referring to joining AQIM ranks) to target the Jews, Christians and apostates everywhere. He called on

Islamists in prisons to be patient, promising that they were not forgotten. He asked priests and imams to stop supporting Jews, Americans, French and Danes and help those of their own flesh and blood.

COMMENT

¶4. (C) Whether the recent bombings in Algeria (reftel) are related to Fatiha's case or not, AQIM clearly has an eye on increasing recruitment by responding to calls from angry online jihadists demanding revenge for Fatiha's honor.

Indeed, it is the first time we have seen online jihadists pleading for AQIM leader to take action. Droukdal's June 5 promise in turn generated positive jihadi reactions on the chat pages. By responding with promises of revenge, Droukdal paints the image of himself as a protector and defender of Muslim honor, boosting his image and status among online jihadists. His exploiting an incident involving an Islamist woman is the latest tactic we've seen, but it reminds us of how al-Qaida can exploit perceptions of women's honor in Iraq and elsewhere.

FORD